



countdown

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External tank arrives for Atlantis' STS-125 mission



◆ Shuttle Update:

The external fuel tank for space shuttle **Atlantis'** STS-125 mission to NASA's Hubble Space Telescope was towed to the dock in the Launch Complex 39 Area Tuesday. After docking, the tank was off-loaded and moved to the Vehicle Assembly Building. Once inside the building, the tank will be raised to vertical, lifted and moved into a checkout cell. Stacking of the tank and solid rocket boosters is scheduled for Aug. 7. Atlantis is targeted to launch Oct. 8.

◆ **KSC Combined Federal Campaign Slogan Contest:** The 2008 KSC Combined Federal Campaign, or CFC, needs a slogan. On July 21, the CFC Slogan Web site will open and be available through Aug. 1. This contest can only be entered once and is for NASA Civil Service employees only. The employee who wins the slogan contest will receive a prize package. For more information, contact Patty Hepburn at 867-2527.

■ **Space Agencies Continue Talks On Global Exploration Strategy** — Representatives of 11 space agencies from around the world gathered in Montreal July 10-12 to continue the coordination of programs to extend human and robotic presence throughout the solar system.

Attending the meeting were representatives of Australia, Canada, the European Space Agency, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Ukraine.

During the meeting in Montreal, hosted by the Canadian Space Agency,

the participants made significant progress on a number of areas that will facilitate cooperation. The accomplishments included establishing a secretariat to be initially hosted by the European Space Agency; planning for conducting effective public engagement and developing tools for sharing information on exploration capabilities and mission plans across agencies.

The participants also took initial steps toward identifying critical space infrastructure interfaces, such as between spacecraft, lunar rovers and lunar habitats, which, if standardized, would increase opportunities for international cooperation.

The agencies reaffirmed the importance of the steps taken in Montreal toward ensuring a comprehensive global approach to space exploration and maintaining an open dialogue as the space exploration architecture planning of individual space agencies moves forward.

■ Ocean Wind Power Maps Reveal Possible Wind Energy Sources

— Efforts to harness the energy potential of Earth's ocean winds could soon gain an important new tool: global satellite maps from NASA. Scientists have been creating maps using nearly a decade of data from NASA's QuikSCAT satellite that reveal ocean areas where winds could produce wind energy.

The new maps have many potential uses including planning the location of offshore wind farms to convert wind energy into electric energy.

QuikSCAT, launched in 1999, tracks the speed, direction and power of winds near the ocean surface. Data from Quik-

SCAT, collected continuously by a specialized microwave radar instrument named SeaWinds, also are used to predict storms and enhance the accuracy of weather forecasts.



New technology has made floating wind farms in the open ocean possible.

A number of wind farms are already in operation worldwide. Ocean wind farms have less environmental impact than onshore wind farms, whose noise tends to disturb sensitive wildlife in their immediate area. Also, winds are generally stronger over the ocean than on land because there is less friction over water to slow the winds down — no hills or mountains to block the wind's path.

Ideally, offshore wind farms should be located in areas where winds blow continuously at high speeds. The new research identifies such areas and offers explanations for the physical mechanisms that produce the high winds.

The new QuikSCAT maps, which add to previous generations of QuikSCAT wind atlases, also will be beneficial to the shipping industry by highlighting areas of the ocean where high winds could be hazardous to ships, allowing them to steer clear of these areas.

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